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MATTER OF FACT

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New "New Look"

WASHINGTON.

Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson has just appointed an impressively distinguished committee to take a fresh-eyed "new look" at the problems of disarmament and atomic energy control. Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, Dr. Vannevar Bush, president John Dickey, of Dartmouth, and Allen W. Dulles, of the Central Intelligence Agency, are the men chosen to undertake this grave responsibility.

It is hard to imagine a bigger job, or to name a more imposing committee. It is also hard to think of any major development which has been greeted with such blank disinterest. For both reasons, this attempt at a new "new look" symbolizes one of the basic dilemmas of our time.

Acheson's decision to name the committee had somewhat diverse origins. On the one hand, a group of leading scientists became deeply concerned, a good many months ago, because they thought the atomic armaments race was getting out of control.

These scientists foresaw the forthcoming explosion of an American hydrogen bomb, announced in this space not long ago. They also foresaw the eventual explosion of a Soviet hydrogen bomb. They not unnaturally shrank back from the prospect of a world divided into two vast, contending power groupings, both brandishing world-destroying weapons. Hence these scientists, among whom Dr. Oppenheimer is reported to have been active, launched a new look at the atomic energy problem on their own initiative.

Trouble in the U. N.

The effort of the scientists, which was conducted at a high level, inevitably tended to drag the whole grim skeleton of atomic energy out of the closet. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the American policy makers were also running into trouble in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The trouble began last year, when President Truman announced that we would make a bold new proposal to the U. N.

It may be "Rocket Hon's" then Kennedy was his usual erratic opener of a two-game series with Manager George Deane before he brought this city on the Tennessee day. I'd like to get him in there, while that thing is still on his mind. Maybe he can get the ball over the plate."

Kennedy Founded

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"peace" propaganda strengthened the scientists' prodding of the State Department. The result was the new committee appointed by Acheson. Appointment of this committee in effect broadens the scope of the scientists' re-examination of the atomic problem, and also puts it on an official basis.

The stated purpose of the new committee is to prepare fresh American proposals for disarmament and atomic energy control, if these can be devised. In briefing the committee members, the State Department policy makers rather plainly indicated that they did not hope for important results, but thought a try had to be made for the look of the thing abroad. The committee members responded that they would do the job in earnest, with entirely open minds.

The committee has now selected McGeorge Bundy, biographer of Henry L. Stimson, as its secretary-field worker, and the great task is in hand. No one can predict the outcome, but certain obvious facts may at least be noted.

West Grows Complacent

First and foremost this country, and indeed the whole Western World, has grown terrifyingly complacent about the atomic problem. It is as though a man had lived in a cave with a tiger for so long that he began to forget the beast's presence, even though the tiger was growing bigger and hungrier all the time. The era of the atomic bomb is just about to merge into the era of the hydrogen bomb. Soviet strategic air power is being constantly increased. The era of long-range missiles may not be far off. Yet our complacency is plain for all to see.

With such terrible dangers hanging over us, something close to an effective air defense has suddenly become practical. But it will be costly and burdensome—the bill for the air defense of the United States alone may run into tens of billions of dollars. Hence the effort to build an effective air defense is not being made, and only a few enthusiasts are troubled by this omission. Foremost among these, incidentally, are the scientists, whose new look at the atomic problem led them

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